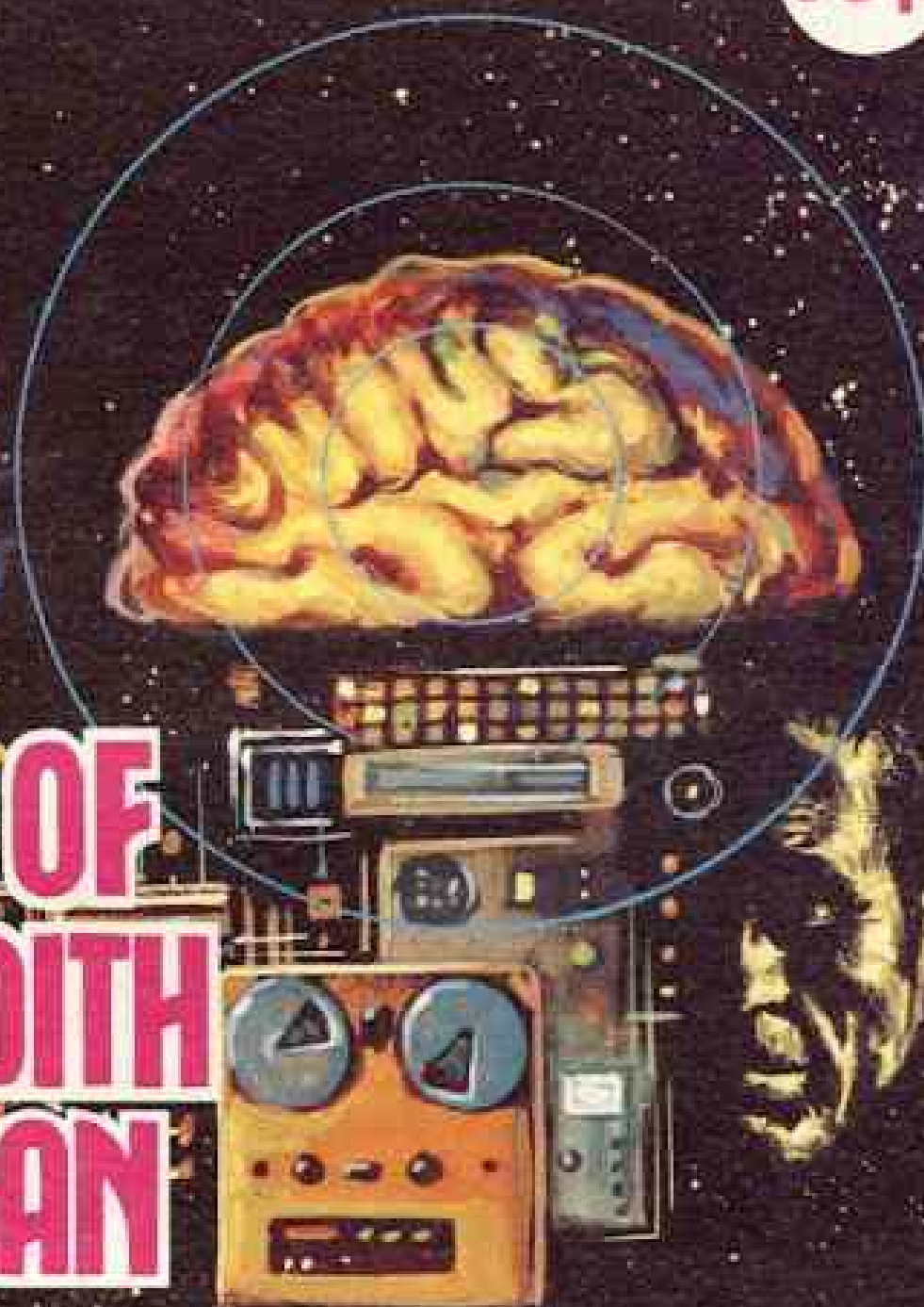


STARBLAZER

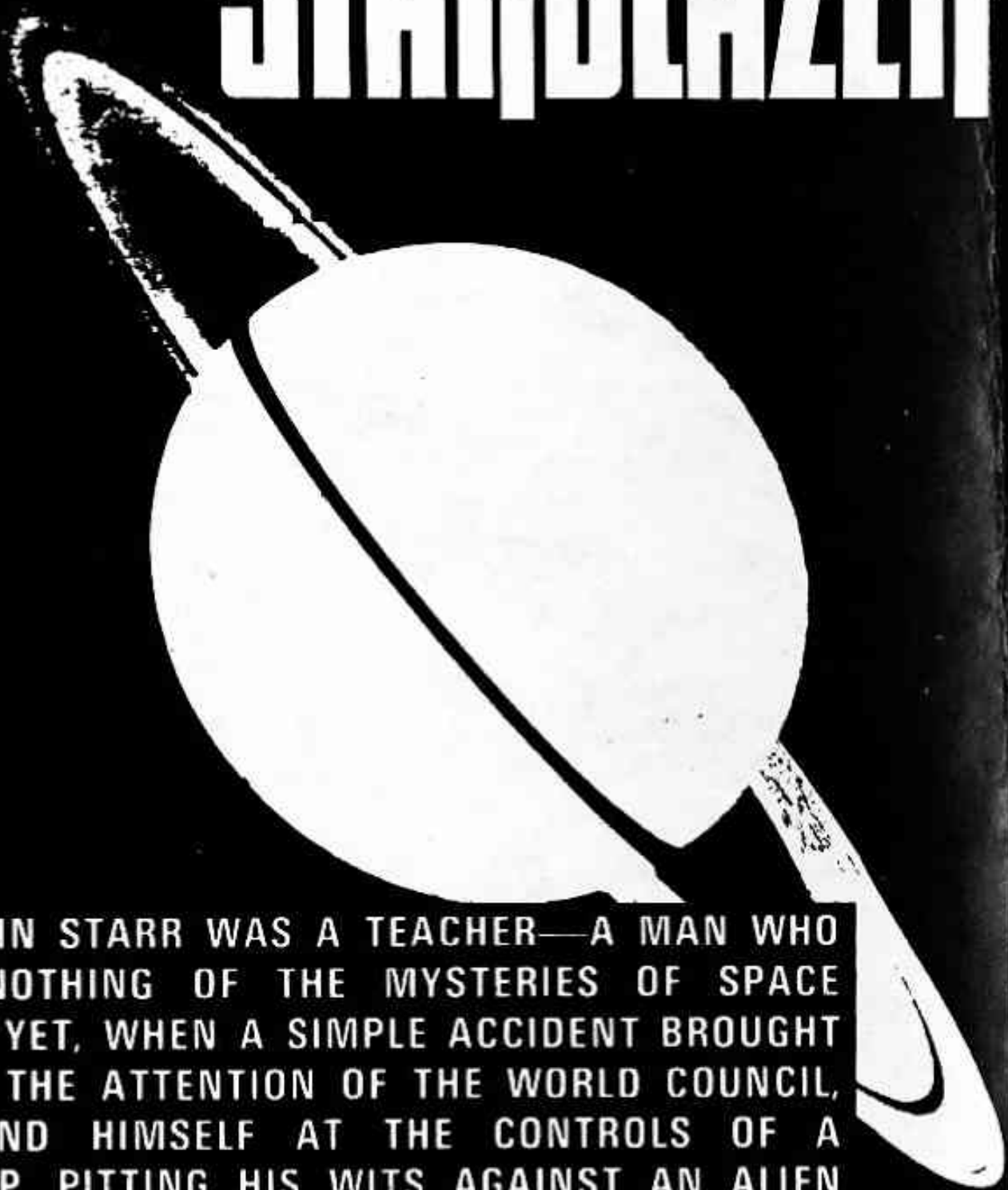
SPACE FICTION ADVENTURE IN PICTURES No. 76

16p

THE MIND OF MEREDITH MORGAN



STARBLAZER



BENJAMIN STARR WAS A TEACHER—A MAN WHO KNEW NOTHING OF THE MYSTERIES OF SPACE TRAVEL. YET, WHEN A SIMPLE ACCIDENT BROUGHT HIM TO THE ATTENTION OF THE WORLD COUNCIL, HE FOUND HIMSELF AT THE CONTROLS OF A STARSHIP, PITTING HIS WITS AGAINST AN ALIEN COMPUTER, AND WARPING SPACE ITSELF—AND IF HE FAILED, EARTH WAS DOOMED TO AN ETERNAL HELL.

THE MIND OF *MEREDITH MORGAN*

THE STARCruiser "BLAZER ONE" HAD JUST COMPLETED A TRAINING MISSION IN DEEP SPACE AND WAS RETURNING TO EARTH.



ON BOARD WERE A GROUP OF CADETS FROM THE SPACE ACADEMY.



CONGRATULATIONS! YOU'VE ALL
DONE VERY WELL. WE'LL MAKE
SPACERS OF YOU YET.

THE SHIP WAS SUDDENLY SHAKEN BY A TREMENDOUS EXPLOSION.



WHAT IN HEAVEN'S NAME?

CAPTAIN—WE'RE UNDER ATTACK.
CONCUSSION CHARGE JUST
DETONATED OFF THE STARBOARD
BOW.

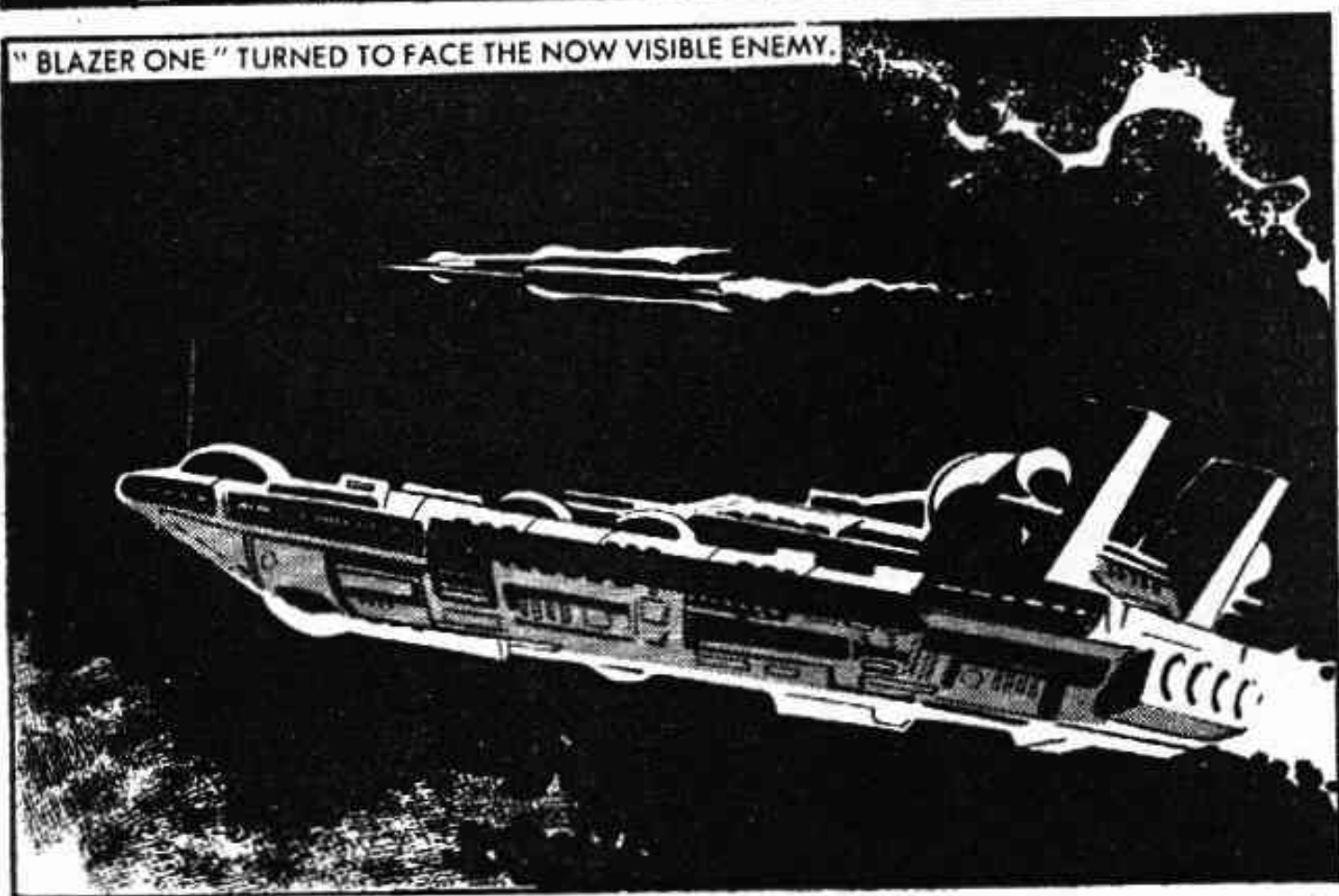
LT 24


30%





"BLAZER ONE" TURNED TO FACE THE NOW VISIBLE ENEMY.





THEY HAVE FIRED—LAUNCH
THE SHUTTLES. THEY WILL NOT
BE NOTICED IN THE
CONFUSION.

... A HIT! WE GOT HIM, CAPTAIN.

YES—BUT IT DOESN'T SEEM
TO HAVE AFFECTED HIM AT ALL.

THE SHUTTLES ARE IN POSITION.
OUR MEN ARE STANDING BY TO
BOARD. PRIME THE HANGFIRE
BOMB.

THE ALIEN SHIP WAS QUICK TO RETALIATE.

THAT WAS TOO
CLOSE FOR COMFORT!

THE HANGFIRE BOMB WAS A TIGHT BALL OF UNSTABLE ELEMENTS INCORPORATING A RETARDING AGENT WHICH ALLOWED FOR DELAYED ACTION DETONATION. ITS FUNCTION WAS TO PENETRATE THE HULL OF A SHIP AND EXPLODE INSIDE, KILLING PERSONNEL BUT LEAVING THE SHIP INTACT.

THE SEARING WHITE HEAT INCINERATED THE
EARTH GUNNERY CREW.



IN THE CHAOS AND CONFUSION, NO-ONE HEARD THE CHARGES THAT BLEW THE OUTER
AIR-LOCK DOORS . . . NO-ONE REALISED THAT THE "BLAZER ONE" HAD BEEN BOARDED.

RESISTANCE MUST BE MET WITH
DEATH, BUT THE CADETS ARE NOT TO
BE HARMED.





THE CADETS WERE HERDED TOGETHER.

GET IN THERE WITH THE
OTHERS. YOU WILL BE DEALT
WITH SHORTLY.



THE CAPTAIN ORDERED HIS MEN TO PUT DOWN THEIR ARMS.

... WHAT DO YOU WANT OF US?



THE ALIEN ORDERED THE CADETS TO BE BROUGHT ONTO THE BRIDGE.

THERE'S SOMETHING ON THIS SHIP YOU
WANT OR YOU WOULD HAVE SIMPLY
BLOWN US TO PIECES. WHAT IS IT?

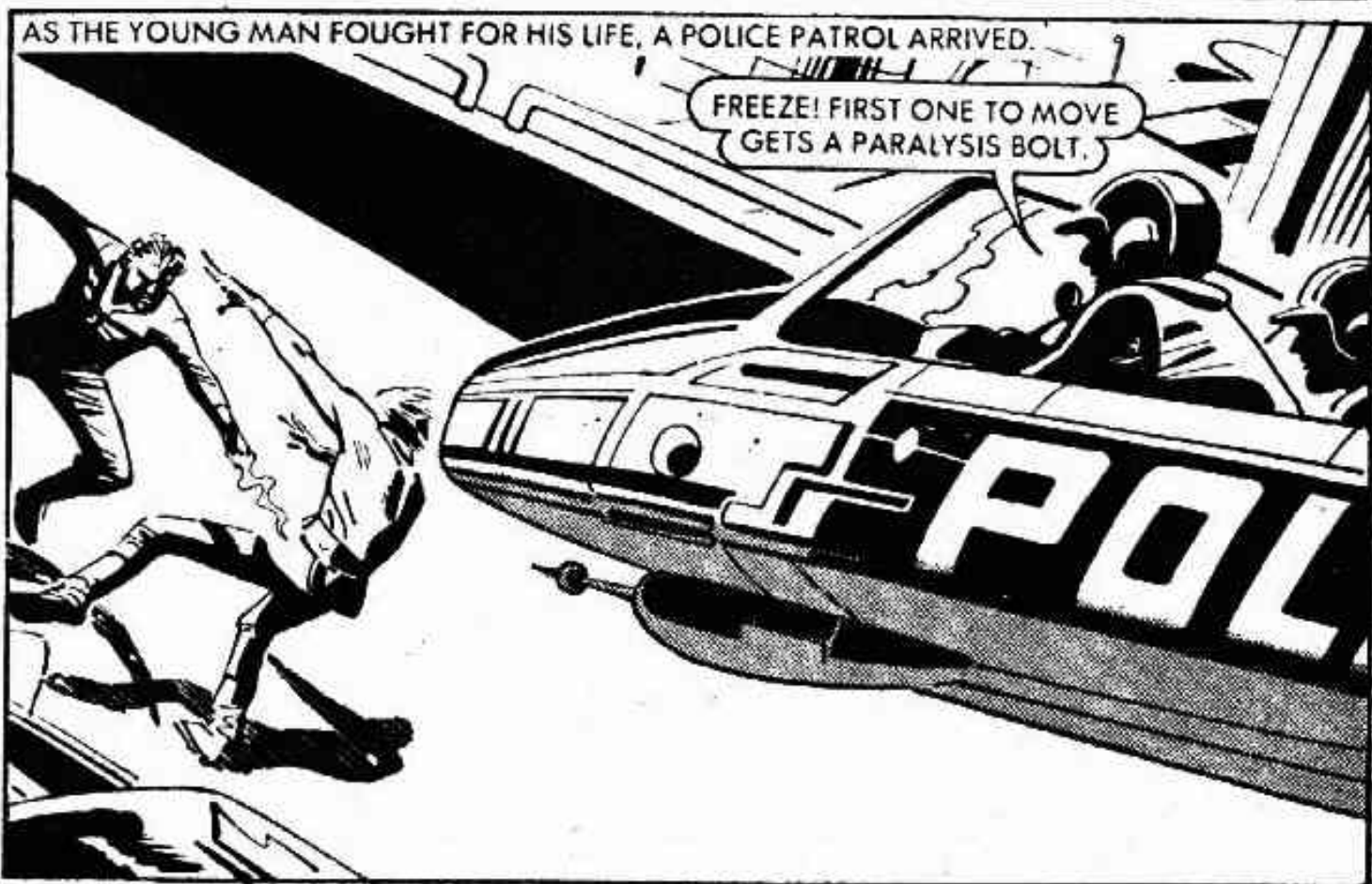




"BLAZER ONE" POWERED ITS WAY BACK TO EARTH, LANDING IN NEW LONDON. AT THAT VERY MOMENT ON ROUTE AG1 —







DETAILS OF BEN AND HIS ADVERSARY WERE RELAYED DIRECTLY TO THE CENTRAL POLICE COMPUTER.



MOMENTS LATER—

GARRET RICE ... ILLEGAL ALCOHOL LEVEL IN BLOOD-STREAM. TWO PREVIOUS MISDEAMORS. WE'RE TAKING YOU IN. AS FOR YOU—STARR, THERE'S A SECTION 47A OUT ON YOU ... DETAIN AND DELIVER—COME WITH US.



A 47A ... THERE MUST BE SOME MISTAKE. WHO AM I TO BE DELIVERED TO?



THE WORLD COUNCIL WANTS TO SEE YOU AT THEIR NEW LONDON CHAMBER, AND THEY WANT YOU YESTERDAY. SO QUIT TALKING, AND LET'S GO.

LESS THAN AN HOUR LATER, BENJAMIN STARR FOUND HIMSELF FACING AN ASSEMBLY OF THE MOST POWERFUL MEN ON EARTH.

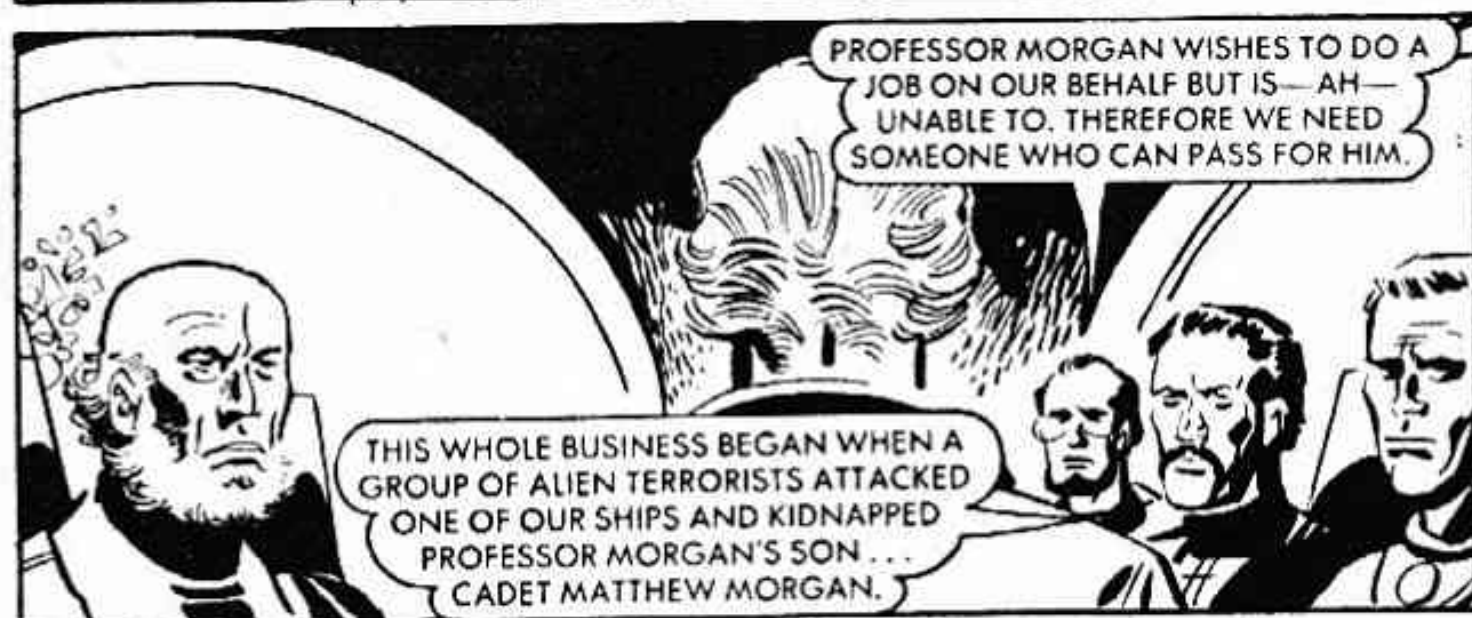
DON'T LOOK SO WORRIED, STARR! WE'VE ASKED YOU HERE TO ENLIST YOUR HELP. WE'LL BRIEF YOU SHORTLY, BUT FIRST LET'S SEE WHAT THE COMPUTER SAYS ABOUT YOU.

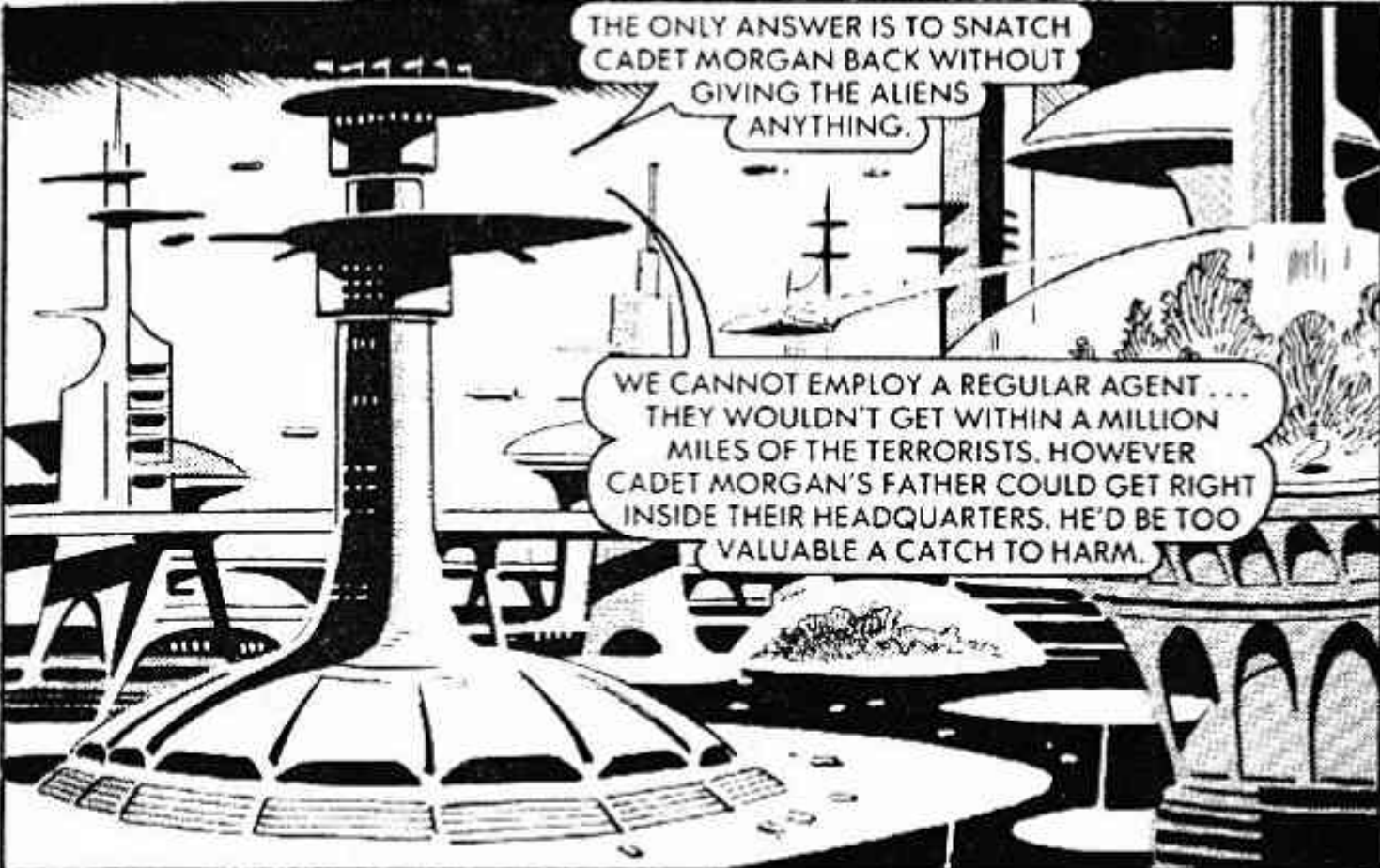


"BENJAMIN STARR... AGED 26... SINGLE... POSSESSES A DEGREE IN PHILOSOPHY, WORKS FOR THE WORLD EDUCATIONAL TRUST, HAS NO HISTORY OF CRIME." A MODEL CITIZEN, EH?

I DO MY BEST.
BUT WHY A 47A.








THE ONLY ANSWER IS TO SNATCH
CADET MORGAN BACK WITHOUT
GIVING THE ALIENS
ANYTHING.

WE CANNOT EMPLOY A REGULAR AGENT...
THEY WOULDN'T GET WITHIN A MILLION
MILES OF THE TERRORISTS. HOWEVER
CADET MORGAN'S FATHER COULD GET RIGHT
INSIDE THEIR HEADQUARTERS. HE'D BE TOO
VALUABLE A CATCH TO HARM.



PROFESSOR MORGAN HAS FLATLY
REFUSED TO CONTINUE ANY OF HIS
HIGHLY STRATEGIC WORK FOR US
UNTIL WE RECOVER HIS SON.

WE CANNOT FORCE HIM TO WORK. IN
FACT WE HAVE TO TREAT HIM VERY
GENTLY INDEED. YOU'LL SEE WHY IN A
MOMENT.



PROFESSOR MORGAN HAD THIS BUILT, BEN. IT'S CALLED THE SYMBIOTRONIC HELMET. WEAR IT AT ALL TIMES AND YOUR BRAIN WILL BE LINKED TO HIS. ALL OF HIS EXPERIENCES, ALL OFF HIS EXPERTISE, WILL BE YOURS.

SO THERE'S NO NEED FOR FURTHER DELAY, IS THERE? IF YOU START OUT STRAIGHTAWAY, I CAN CONTINUE YOUR BRIEFING VIA THE HELMET.



AND SO, SCANT HOURS LATER...

HOW ARE YOU LIKING IT, BEN?

CONSIDERING THAT I HAD TO DO THIS OR SPEND TEN YEARS ON A PENAL PLANT THANKS TO A TRUMPED UP TREBLE MISDEMEANOR—NOT TOO BAD.

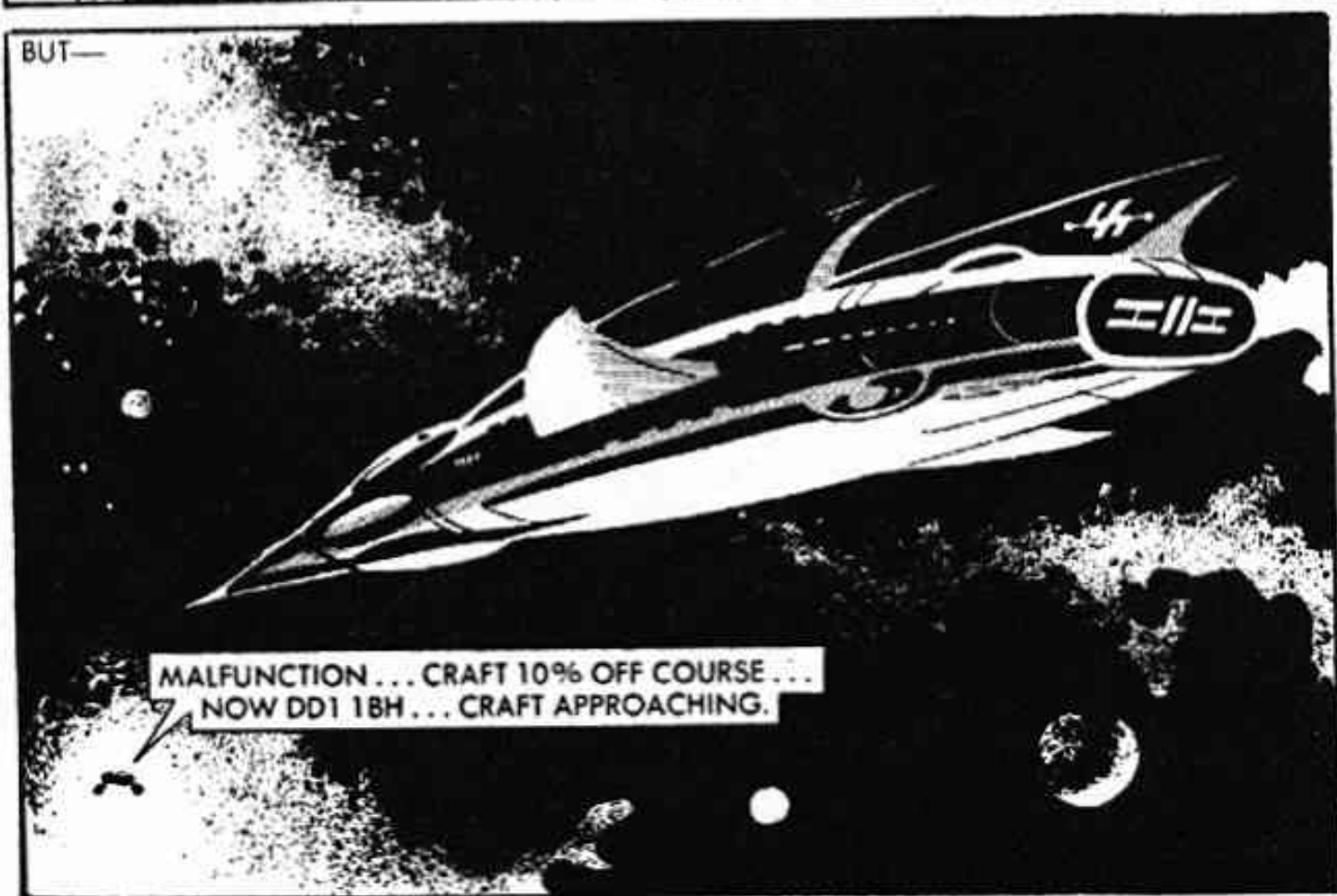




IT'S AMAZING. I DON'T EVEN HAVE
TO THINK ABOUT WHAT I'M DOING.
I JUST—KNOW.

IT WORKS ON TELEKINETIC
IMPULSES—SO THERE'S NO DELAY IN
FEEDING INFORMATION TO YOU.
OH, BY THE WAY... IN THE
COMPARTMENT TO THE RIGHT OF THE
HELM ARE A FEW GADGETS THAT YOU
MIGHT FIND USEFUL...

BUT—



MALFUNCTION... CRAFT 10% OFF COURSE...
NOW DD1 1BH... CRAFT APPROACHING.

WHAT THE . . .!! SOME STRANGE
FORCE DRAGGING THE SHIP
TOWARDS THAT BLACK CRUISER.

ONLY A TRACTOR BEAM,
BEN. DON'T WORRY.

BEN'S SHIP WAS DRAGGED BEHIND THE ALIEN CRUISER,
UNTIL EVENTUALLY THEY REACHED A SPACE STATION.

PLEASE USE DOCKING
BAY NUMBER SIX.



THE DOCKING COMPLETED, BEN WAS LED TO A LARGE ROOM.

YOU DO NOT LOOK LIKE MEREDITH MORGAN...

I WILL TALK ONLY TO YOUR LEADER.



THE LEADER SOON ARRIVED—

I AM RRAGG... AND AS YOU SEE YOUR SON IS UNHARMED. IF I MAY SAY SO, YOU LOOK TOO YOUNG TO HAVE A SON OF THAT AGE.

HAVE YOU NEVER HEARD OF COSMETIC SURGERY? GET READY TO LEAVE, SON.

YES, FATHER.







RRAGG WAS FINALLY SATISFIED—



IN THE CELL—

WELL DONE, MATTHEW. YOU HELPED FOOL THEM INTO BELIEVING THAT I'M YOUR FATHER. MY NAME'S REALLY BEN STARR.

I RECOGNISED THE HELMET. WHAT NOW?

I HAVE A FEW DEVICES THAT SHOULD HELP. SUCH AS THIS ONE. IT'S A LOCAL MOLECULAR FREQUENCY MODULATOR—BUT I HAVEN'T HAD THE CHANCE TO TRY IT.

A MOLECULAR FREQUENCY MODULATOR COULD ALTER THE DENSITY OF AN OBJECT'S MOLECULES IN A SMALL AREA—MAKING THAT AREA OF THE OBJECT THICKER AND HEAVIER THAN BEFORE.

NOW I POINT IT AT THE WALL...

ACTIVATED





BEN AND MATT SPED AWAY FROM THE ALIEN SPACE STATION.

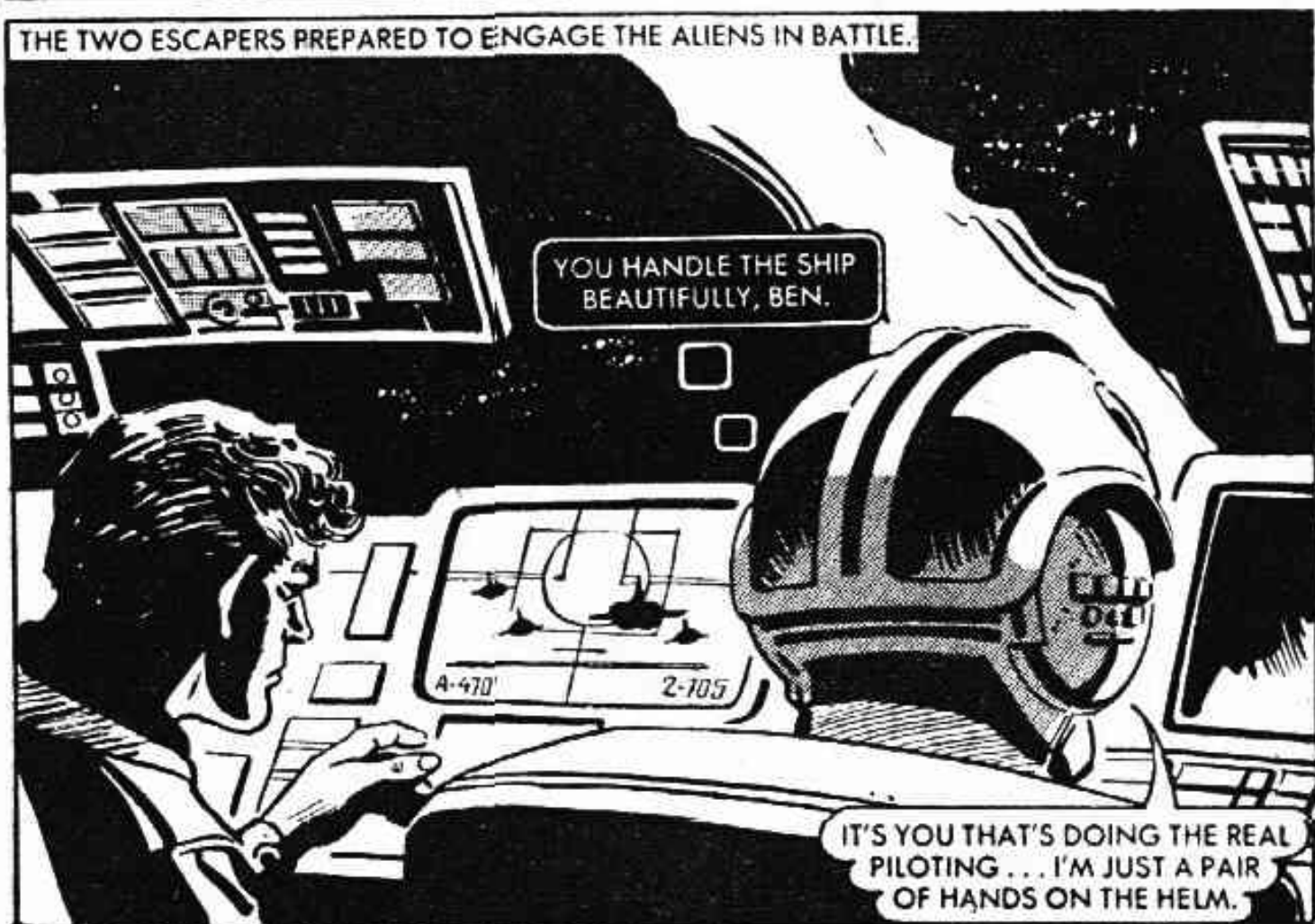
WE TOOK THEM BY SURPRISE, BUT
WE WON'T DO THAT AGAIN!

I'LL HANDLE THE
LASER CANNON, BEN.



THE TWO ESCAPERS PREPARED TO ENGAGE THE ALIENS IN BATTLE.

YOU HANDLE THE SHIP
BEAUTIFULLY, BEN.



IT'S YOU THAT'S DOING THE REAL
PILOTING... I'M JUST A PAIR
OF HANDS ON THE HELM.

MATT PROVED HIMSELF TO BE A GOOD MARKSMAN.



RRAGG WAS FURIOUS WITH HIS MEN FOR ALLOWING THE HOSTAGES TO ESCAPE—

IT'S A SMALL TERRAN STARHOPPER.
WE'RE FASTER AND MORE HEAVILY
ARMED. BLOW IT TO PIECES, OR
I'LL VAPOURISE YOU.

I... I'M TRYING SIR.



WELL YOU'RE NOT
TRYING HARD ENOUGH.

ABOARD THE STARHOPPER.

I THINK WE'RE OUTRUNNING THEM.



YOU'RE RIGHT, BEN, LOOK—
THEY'RE TURNING BACK.





A METEOR STORM WAS ONE OF THE GREATEST HAZARDS A SPACER COULD FACE. THOUSANDS OF TONS OF ROCK RAINED DOWN ON THE STARHOPPER, WHICH SUDDENLY SEEMED VERY FLIMSY TO ITS OCCUPANTS.



WITH THE MIND OF MEREDITH MORGAN CONTROLLING HIS HANDS, BEN THREW THE STARHOPPER TO THE LEFT, TO THE RIGHT, UP, DOWN — EVERYWHERE.

BEN ... WE'RE HIT.

HANG ON, WE'RE NEARLY
OUT OF IT ...

DOESN'T LOOK TOO GOOD. WE'RE HOLED NEAR
THE MAIN REACTOR, AND LOSING POWER. IT'S
JUST A PATCH-UP JOB, BUT WE'LL HAVE TO LAND
TO DO IT. CHECK OUR CO-ORDINATES, MATT.
SEE IF YOU CAN FIND SOMEPLACE FOR US TO
SET DOWN.





IF WE DON'T LAND SOON WE'RE
JUST GOING TO RUN OUT OF POWER
AND WE'LL DIE IN SPACE ANYWAY.

MINRAUD HERE WE COME!

AS THE STARHOPPER DREW NEAR TO MINRAUD.



HMMM... STILL A LOT OF METEOR
ACTIVITY AROUND. I WONDER..?

I'D SAY IT'S OUR ONLY
CHANCE TO GET PAST
MINRAUD'S ORBITAL
DEFENCES.



BEN SELECTED A SUITABLY SIZED PIECE OF SPACE ROCK, AND WENT AFTER IT.



ROCKET POWERED GRAPPLING IRONS STREAKED TOWARDS THE METEOR AND EMBEDDED THEMSELVES IN IT.

OKAY. NOW REEL US IN SO THAT WE'RE SITTING RIGHT ON TOP OF HER.



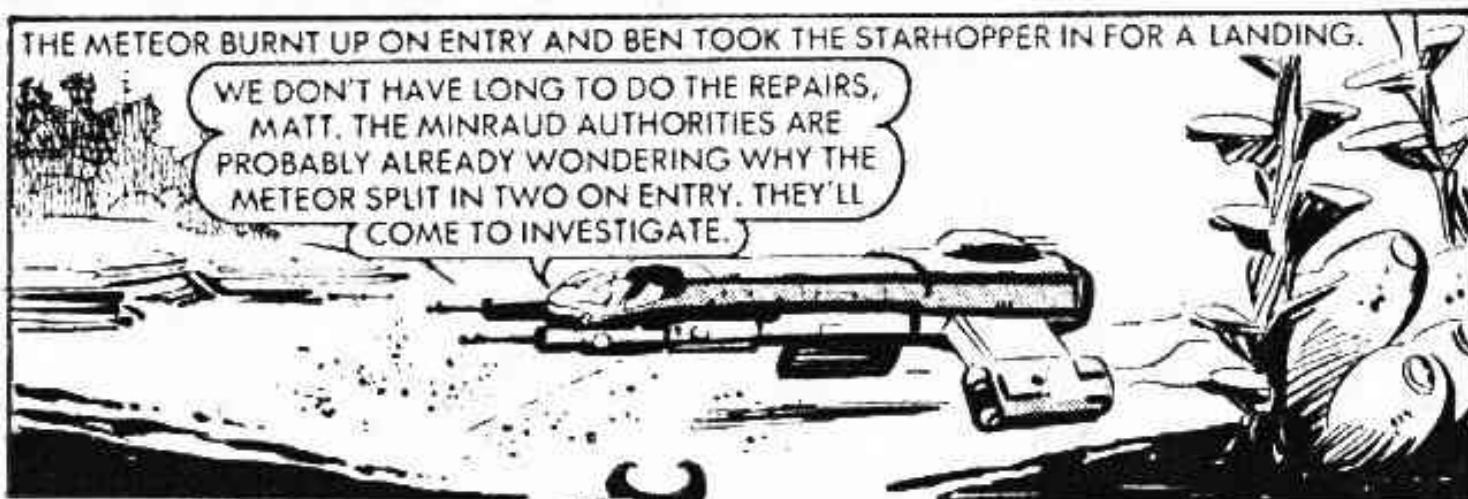
WITH THE STARHOPPER FIRMLY ANCHORED TO THE METEOR, BEN PREPARED TO ENTER MINRAUD'S SPACE.

YOU CAN BET WE'RE BEING SCANNED RIGHT NOW, MATT. BUT WITH A BIT OF LUCK ALL THAT'S REGISTERING IS METEOR.





IF WE'RE SPOTTED THE AUTOMATIC DEFENCE SYSTEMS WILL VAPOURISE US FIRST, AND ASK QUESTIONS LATER.



THE METEOR BURNT UP ON ENTRY AND BEN TOOK THE STARHOPPER IN FOR A LANDING.

WE DON'T HAVE LONG TO DO THE REPAIRS, MATT. THE MINRAUD AUTHORITIES ARE PROBABLY ALREADY WONDERING WHY THE METEOR SPLIT IN TWO ON ENTRY. THEY'LL COME TO INVESTIGATE.



AS THEY LABOURED TO PATCH THE HOLE IN THE SIDE OF THEIR SHIP, BEN AND MATT WERE UNAWARE THAT THEY WERE BEING WATCHED.

WHAT DO WE HAVE HERE?

LOOK LIKE EARTHIES TO ME...

BEN... WE'VE GOT COMPANY.

A TEENAGE GANG, BEN. THERE ARE QUITE A FEW OF THEM ON MINRAUD. THEY'RE SIMILAR TO WHAT USED TO BE CALLED "HELL'S ANGELS" ON EARTH.

LOOK AT THEM. LIKE SCARED CHILDREN.



THE MINRAUDAN LASHED OUT AT BEN, AND THAT WAS THE SIGNAL FOR A FULL-SCALE BRAWL.

WE DON'T WANT ANY TROUBLE...
WHY CAN'T YOU LEAVE US ALONE?



MATT AND BEN WERE OUTNUMBERED —





BEN SOON CAME ACROSS A TOWNSHIP —



IT DID NOT TAKE BEN LONG TO LOCATE THE GANG'S HOVERBIKES —

THOSE ARE THE GANG'S HOVERBIKES,
ALRIGHT. BETTER USE ONE OF MY
DEVICES.





A SUPERNOVA CHARGE WAS A BALL OF INTENSE LIGHT THAT BLINDED TEMPORARILY.

BEN MADE HIS GETAWAY IN THE CONFUSION —



THIS IS THE QUICKEST WAY BACK.



BEN WAS BACK AT THE STARHOPPER WITHIN MINUTES.

I'VE FINISHED THE REPAIRS, BEN, AND SHE'S WARMED UP FOR TAKE OFF.

NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON LOOK!

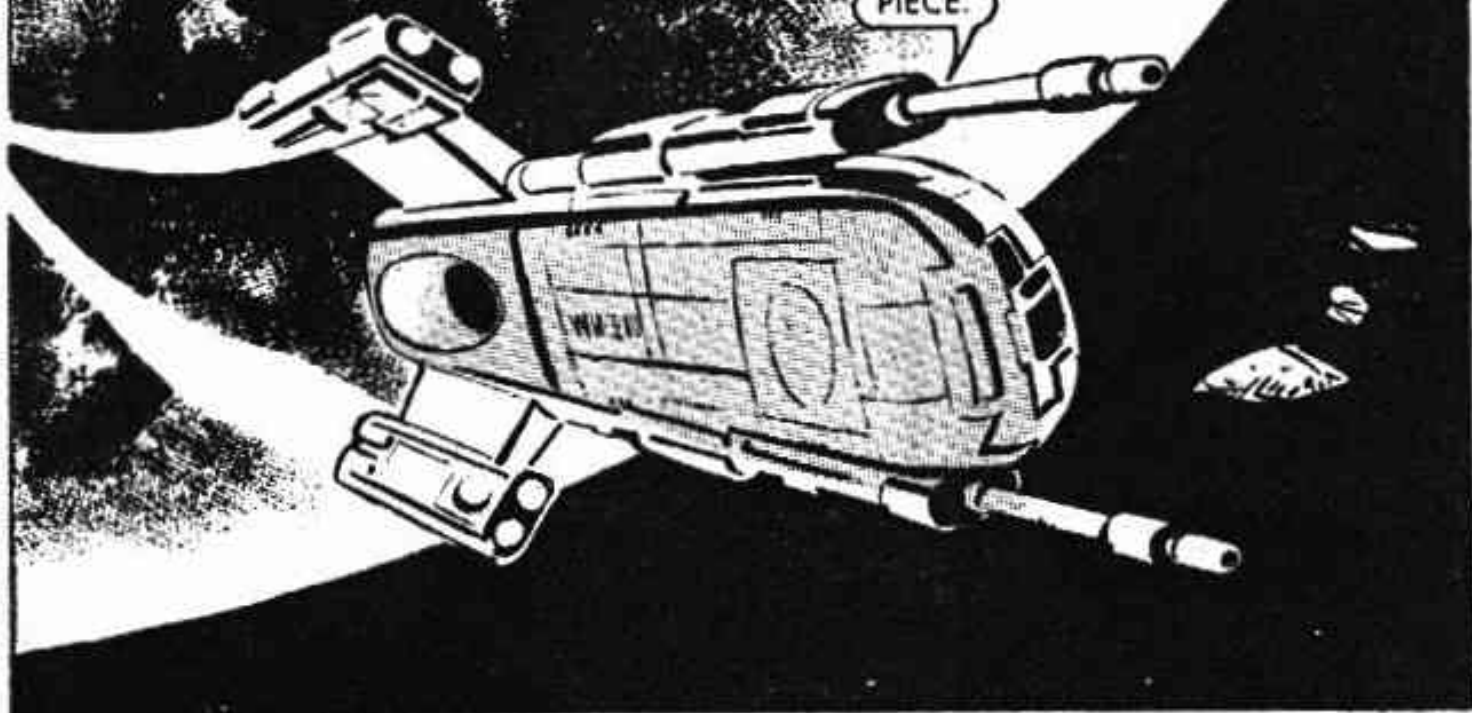


THE MINRAUD AUTHORITIES HAD COME TO INVESTIGATE THE "METEOR".



BEN HAD THE STARHOPPER ON FULL SPEED, BUT SPEED ALONE WAS NOT GOING TO ENSURE THEIR SAFETY.

WE'RE COMING TO THE RING OF ORBITAL DEFENCES. WE'RE BACK TO FULL POWER NOW SO WITH A BIT OF LUCK WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO GET BY THEM IN ONE PIECE.



THE SHIP WENT INTO AN ELABORATE SERIES OF TWISTS AND ROLLS AS DESTRUCTIVE BEAMS OF ENERGY LANCED TOWARDS IT.

YOU'RE GETTING QUITE GOOD AT THIS, BEN. MY BRAIN IS ONLY DOING ABOUT HALF OF THE PILOTING NOW.



THANKS, PROFESSOR. BUT SAVE THE CONGRATULATIONS UNTIL WE'RE OUT OF THIS SPOT.

THE ORBITAL DEFENCES WERE NOT ALL THAT BEN AND MATT HAD TO WORRY ABOUT.

MINRAUD BATTLESHIPS CLOSING
FAST FROM THE REAR. GRAB THE
LASER CANNON, MATT.

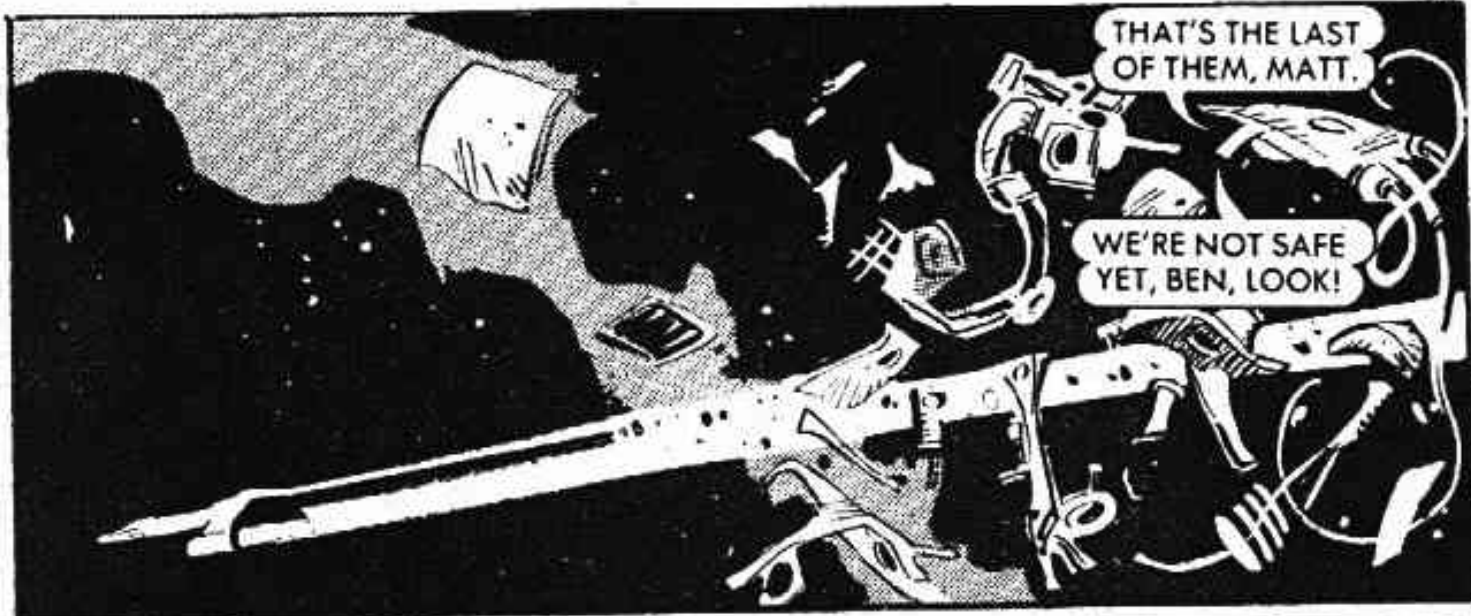
WILCO...

AS THE MINRAUD SHIPS BORE DOWN ON THE EARTH VESSEL —

FIRE!

WELL DONE, MATT. THAT'LL
GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT.

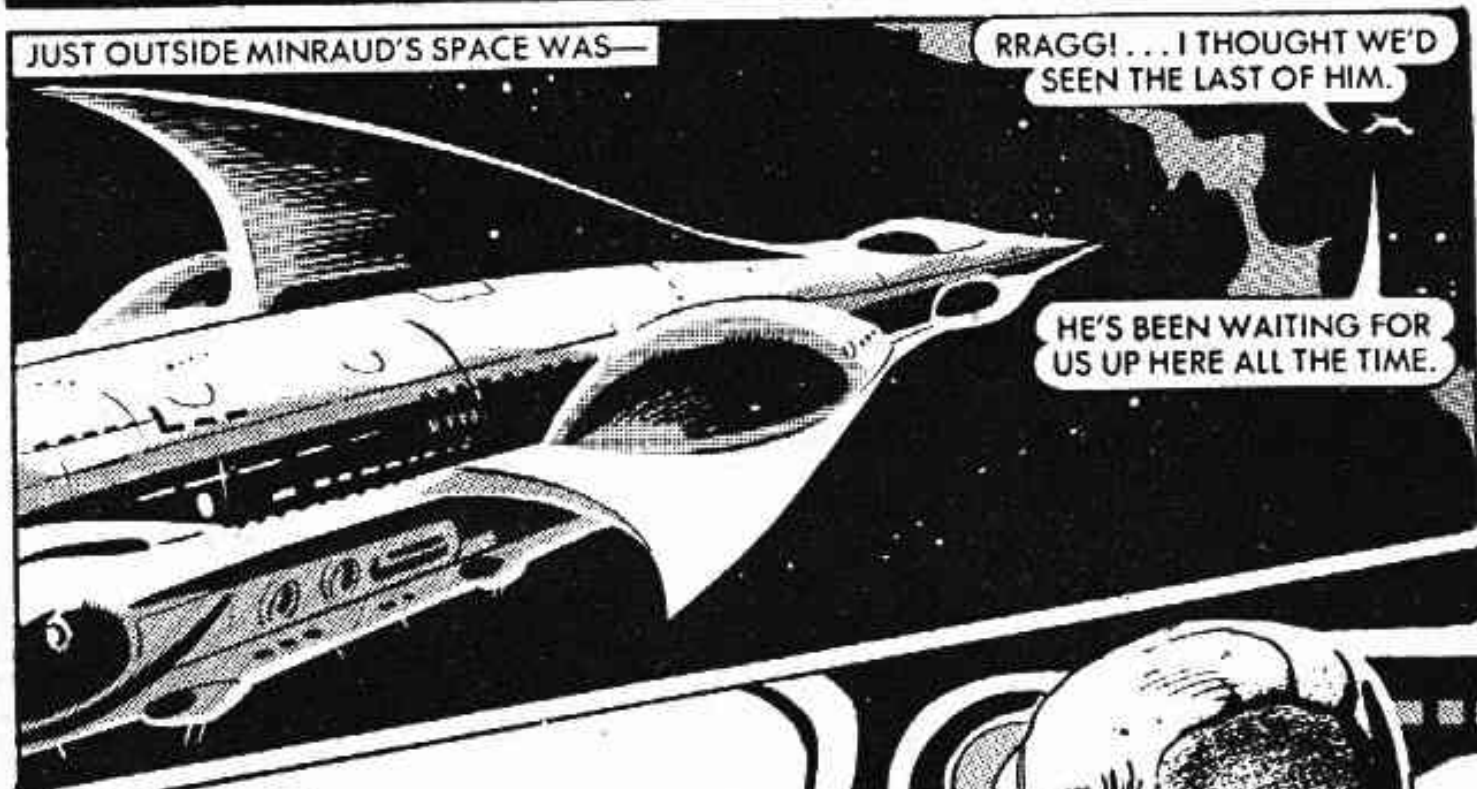




THAT'S THE LAST
OF THEM, MATT.

WE'RE NOT SAFE
YET, BEN, LOOK!

JUST OUTSIDE MINRAUD'S SPACE WAS—



RRAGGI! ... I THOUGHT WE'D
SEEN THE LAST OF HIM.

HE'S BEEN WAITING FOR
US UP HERE ALL THE TIME.



THE EARTHMEN! ... CRIPPLE THEIR
SHIP, BUT TAKE THEM ALIVE.


HERE WE GO AGAIN, MATT.



MORE MINRAUD SHIPS.


WHAT?





I HAVE AN IDEA
THAT MAY DELAY THEM A
LITTLE. PUT THE SHIP ON FULL
SPEED AND AUTO, THEN
DO AS I TELL YOU . . .

WHILE THE STARHOPPER CONTINUED TO STREAK AWAY FROM MINRAUD, BEN WAS BUSY
MODIFYING THE CIRCUITRY OF HIS COMMUNICATOR.



OKAY . . . LET'S SEE IF THIS WORKS.
MEREDITH MORGAN CALLING ALL SHIPS,
MEREDITH MORGAN CALLING ALL SHIPS.
COME IN PLEASE. I WISH TO STOP
FIGHTING AND GIVE MYSELF UP.



BEN HAD MODIFIED THE COMMUNICATOR TO TRANSMIT AN ULTRA-HIGH FREQUENCY SIGNAL. THE EFFECT ON THE SHIPS LISTENING-IN WAS DEVASTATING.



WHILE RRAGG AND HIS MEN, AND THE OCCUPANTS OF THE MINRAUDAN SHIPS WERE RECOVERING FROM THE SHOCK TO THEIR NERVOUS SYSTEMS, BEN WAS RACING AWAY FROM THEM.



HERE THEY COME AGAIN.
DON'T THEY EVER GIVE UP?

THEIR ALIEN NERVOUS SYSTEMS ARE
DIFFERENT TO OURS, BEN. THEY MUST
RECOVER FROM THE EFFECTS OF
ULTRASONICS A LOT QUICKER.





QUICKLY, BEN PUNCHED A SERIES OF CO-ORDINATES INTO THE AUTO-PILOT COMPUTER.

THAT OUGHT TO TAKE US PRETTY CLOSE TO RRAGG'S SPACE STATION, AND IT LEAVES MY HANDS FREE TO DO SOME WORK. MATT—COVER OUR REAR.

KEEP ON HIS TAIL, WE MUST CATCH HIM.




THE MORE I THINK ABOUT IT, THE MORE CERTAIN I AM THAT THIS PLAN WILL WORK, PROFESSOR. BUT I CAN'T HELP FEELING THAT I'M EXPOSING MATT TO UNNECESSARY DANGER. ...

THE RISK IS GREAT, BEN, BUT HE'S HARDLY BEEN ON A PICNIC SINCE YOU ESCAPED FROM RRAGG, HAS HE?

LET'S SEE ... STEP THE FREQUENCY UP TO FIFTY-SEVEN K., ALTER THE TEMPORAL OSCILLATOR ... THREE—THAT OUGHT TO DO IT.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING EXACTLY, BEN?





COOKING UP A LITTLE SURPRISE FOR
OUR FRIENDS BACK THERE . . . AND
HOPEFULLY WIPING OUT RRAGG
AND HIS TERRORISTS ONCE AND FOR
ALL.



THE SPACE STATION! THIS IS
IT, MATT . . . THE SHOWDOWN.

THE EARTHMAN IS A FOOL. HE IS
GOING TO ATTACK MY
HEADQUARTERS.

ALERTED BY RRAGG, MORE TERRORIST STARSHIPS WERE LAUNCHED.
THEY RUSHED TO ATTACK THE STARHOPPER.

WE HAVE TO GET
CLOSE ENOUGH TO THE SPACE
STATION TO DROP OUR LITTLE
SURPRISE ON IT.

CLOSE ENOUGH?
FIRE!





WHAT IS THE FOOL DOING?



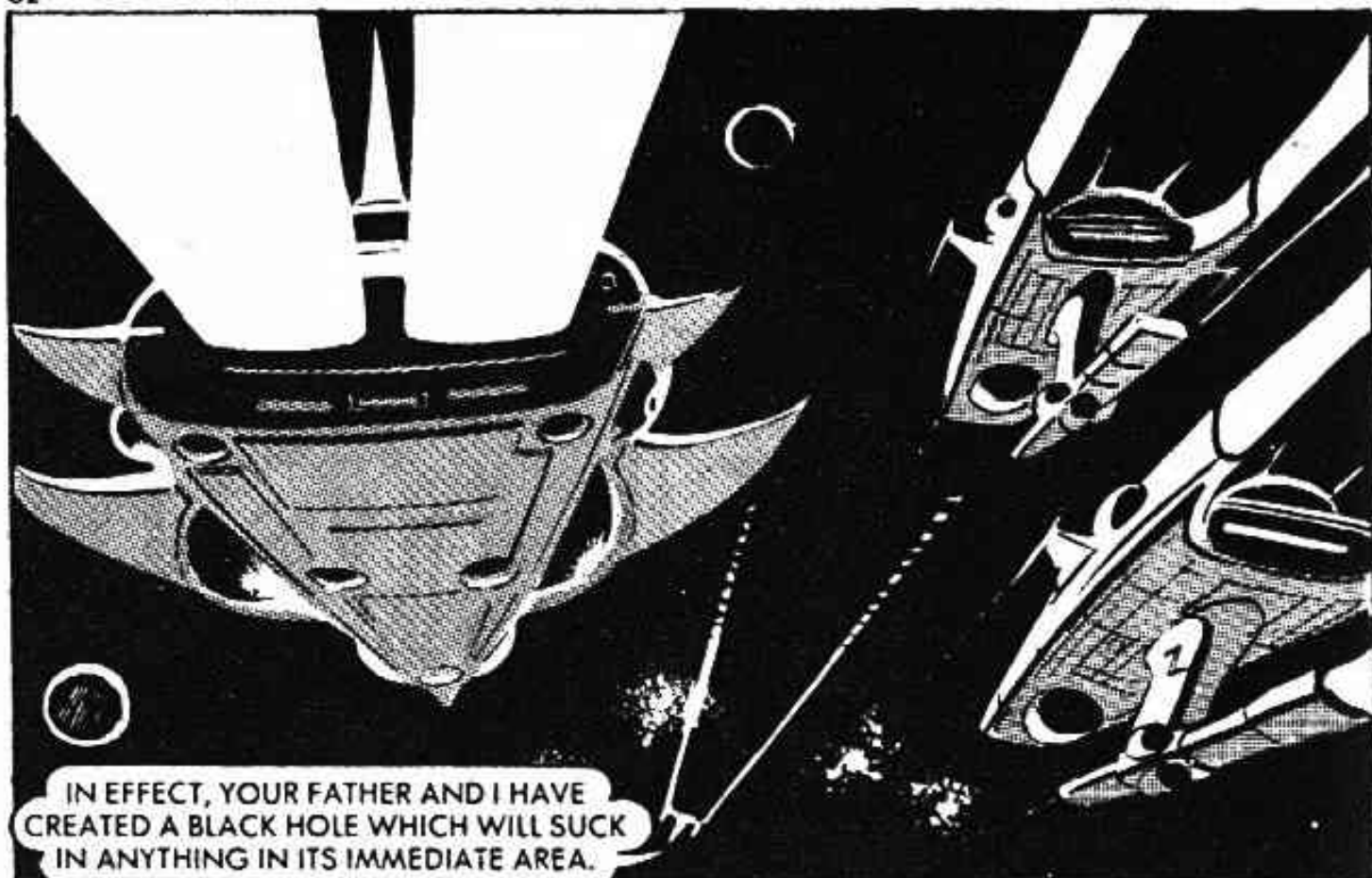
GET OUT OF THERE FAST, BEN. YOU'VE ONLY GOT SECONDS TO CLEAR THE AREA OF PRIMARY IMPLOSION.

WARP DRIVE ENGAGED!

BEN PUSHED THE STARHOPPER TO MAXIMUM SPEED, DRAINING EVERY LAST UNIT OF ENERGY FROM HER REACTORS, AND AS HE SPED AWAY FROM THE SPACE STATION HE EXPLAINED WHAT HE HAD DONE.




WITH YOUR FATHER GUIDING ME, MATT, I ALTERED THE CIRCUITRY OF THE MOLECULAR MODULATOR. IT'S A LOT MORE POWERFUL NOW, AND WHEN IT BEGINS TO WORK IN A SECOND OR TWO IT'LL START A CHAIN REACTION, CAUSING THE MOLECULES OF THE SPACE STATION TO GROW DENSER AND DENSER AND EVENTUALLY TO COLLAPSE IN UPON THEMSELVES.



UNAWARE OF THE NEED TO CLEAR THE AREA OF THE SPACE STATION, RRAGG'S MEN AND THE SQUADRON FROM MINRAUD WERE SLOW TO REACT TO BEN'S LATEST HIGH SPEED ESCAPE.





HE HAS DESTROYED MY BASE AND WRECKED
MY ORGANISATION . . . NOW HE HAS ENSURED
THAT NONE OF US WILL ESCAPE . . .

THE SPACIAL VORTEX SHREDDED CRAFT INTO A MILLION PIECES.



EVEN BEN AND MATT FELT THE FATAL ATTRACTION OF THE BLACK HOLE, EVEN THOUGH THEY WERE LIGHT YEARS AWAY—

SHIP'S SLOWING DOWN... WE'RE BEING PULLED BACKWARDS...

KEEP HER STEADY, BEN. USE AUXILIARY THRUSTERS, EJECT ALL EXCESS WEIGHT.




FINALLY THE SHIP BEGAN TO PULL AWAY.



BACK ON EARTH BEN RETURNED THE SYMBIOTRONIC HELMET TO THE WORLD COUNCIL.

HERE YOU ARE, GENTLEMEN. I'D LIKE TO SAY THAT IT'S BEEN A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE SHARING ANOTHER MAN'S BRAIN ... BUT I'D HARDLY CALL IT FUN.

A black and white comic book panel showing Ben, a man in a flight suit with a harness, handing a helmet to a man in a military-style uniform with a high collar. Ben is smiling slightly. The man in uniform is looking at the helmet. In the background, other people in uniforms are visible, and there are some control panels with buttons and switches.

THE THREAT OF MINRAUD STILL EXISTS ... WE MUST PREPARE FOR THAT.

WE CANNOT DO IT ALONE!

A black and white comic book panel showing a close-up of three men. The man in the center is wearing glasses and a flight suit. The man on the right is older, with a beard, and wearing a military-style uniform. The man on the left is younger, with short hair, and wearing a flight suit. They are all looking serious. In the background, there are some control panels and a window.



**DON'T MISS THIS MONTH'S
OTHER ACTION-PACKED
ADVENTURE**



NOW ON SALE



STARBLAZERS

GUIDE TO THE GALAXY

LEO 5TH SIGN OF THE ZODIAC

The easily identified constellation of Leo lies in the Northern Hemisphere. Regulus (Alpha Leonis) is the brightest star, being of the first magnitude.